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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1560  
INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY  
RUEHUJA/AMEMBASSY ABUJA 1616  
RUEHAR/AMEMBASSY ACCRA 1483  
RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA 1620  
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 0279  
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 0885  
RUEHDK/AMEMBASSY DAKAR 1248  
RUEHKM/AMEMBASSY KAMPALA 1676  
RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI 4084  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 1445  
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME 2103  
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 0743  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC//DHO-7//  
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC  
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS  
RHMFISS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 1837  
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC  
RUCPDOG/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC  
RUFOADA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK//DOOC/ECMO/CC/DAO/DOB/DOI//  
RUEPGBA/CDR USEUCOM INTEL VAIHINGEN GE//ECJ23-CH/ECJ5M//

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 000503

SIPDIS

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AF/S FOR S. HILL  
NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR B. PITTMAN  
USAID FOR M. COPSON AND E. LOKEN  
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU  
ADDIS ABABA FOR ACSS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/07/2017  
TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [ASEC](#) [ZI](#)  
SUBJECT: WOZA'S SILENT MARCH ATTRACTS HARSH RESPONSE FROM  
POLICE

REF: HARARE 00343

Classified By: Ambassador Christopher Dell under Section 1.4 b/d

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SUMMARY  
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[¶1.](#) (SBU) Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA) supporters staged a "silent march" on June 6 in Bulawayo to demand inclusion in mediation talks between the government and the main opposition party; police used violence to disperse the crowd of 200 and arrested five women. WOZA leaders Jenni Williams and Magodonga Mahlangu were arrested later. All seven women remain in custody and reports of injuries are unconfirmed. We have provided a recommended press statement in paragraph [¶5.](#) End Summary.

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WOZA Holds Silent March For A Voice  
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[¶2.](#) (U) In an effort to give a voice to civil society in the SADC-initiated mediation talks between the Government of Zimbabwe (GOZ) and the main opposition party Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA) supporters on June 6 staged a "silent march" in Bulawayo, the country's second city. Police used batons to violently break up the crowd of 200 and arrested five women. WOZA leaders Jenni Williams and Magodonga Mahlangu were arrested later when marchers regrouped in front of the police station and demanded to be arrested in a show of solidarity. All seven

women remain in custody and reports of injuries are unconfirmed. Approximately 15 other marchers have sought medical attention for minor injuries.

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The Timeworn Tactic: Beat, Arrest and Stall  
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¶3. (U) Kassam Ncube, the lawyer representing the arrestees, told poloff that police permitted him access to the arrestees the evening of June 6 and they did not appear to be injured. He added, however, that the arrestees may have been too intimidated by the police in the room to speak freely. There is particular concern for the safety of Williams given recent threats of violence against her leveled by Bulawayo police officers (reftel).

¶4. (U) Ncube also told us that police denied him access to his clients on June 7 and chased him out of the station. They also denied the arrestees food delivered by supporters. Ncube hopes that the police will take the arrestees to court on Friday -- if not, the group will remain in jail over the weekend.

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Recommended Press Statement  
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¶5. (SBU) Post recommends the following language for a Department press statement.

"We condemn the action of the Government of Zimbabwe in

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suppressing a peaceful demonstration in Bulawayo by Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA), which was calling for a voice in mediation talks over the future of the country. In view of recent public threats by police in Bulawayo to harm WOZA National Director Jenni Williams we express particular concern and hold the government accountable for her safety.

This latest attack on civil society further accentuates the need for immediate dialogue among all stakeholders concerned with halting Zimbabwe's deepening political and economic crisis. We again call on the Government of Zimbabwe to respect the rule of law and the rights of all Zimbabweans to petition their government for change."

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Comment  
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¶6. (C) Despite increased international attention and the SADC-initiated mediation talks, security forces continue to wield batons to violently break up peaceful demonstrations as an automatic response. This latest event further demonstrates that the GOZ views civil society as a threat to crush rather than as a social partner with valid concerns.  
End Comment.  
DELL